E

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECA/AATD/84/8
October 1984

Original: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fifth Biennial Training Development Conference of
the African Association for Training and Development

Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) 19-29 November 1984

LC/NAIROB

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: BASIC ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Non-Formal Education and Development: Basic issues for consideration

I. Introduction

One of the tasks of the Fifth Biennial Training Development Conference of the African Association for Training and Development would be to review the role of non-formal education in extending knowledge, skills and information, appropriate technology and educational opportunities to the rural enterpreneurs, traditional craftsmen, out-of-school youth and peasants, and thus enabling them to refine their skills and knowledge for increased productivity.

The conference would look at non-formal education as part of the widespread search for alternatives in educational experience because of the failure of formal education to respond to development problems. These problems emanate from gaps, discrepancies and disparities caused by some of the following factors:

(a) the rapid population growth accompanied by the quest for more educational opportunities which have not kept pace with the provision of educational opportunity infra-structure - i.e. classrooms, teachers, instructional materials etc.

(b) the disparity of educational facilities and opportunities between the rural and urban areas which has resulted into rural-to-urban drift for better opportunities and social services;

(c) the failure of the formal system to equip its outputs with better knowledge, relevant skills and right attitudes for productive work or self employment. The system continues to educate for both richness and poverty, in as far as some of its output get good salaried jobs and others pace between bare subsistence and poverty.

(d) the high rates of illiteracy and the low levels of skills available for socio-economic development. Illiteracy has proved to be a serious impediment to rural development in the region; and in this regard formal education has failed to be the key to the modernization and ruralization process as was hoped at the time of independence.

(e) the different meanings and notions attached to the various firms of non-formal education processes.

(f) the lack of structural linkage between rural users and urban centres of knowledge and information organization for the enhancement of integrated rural development. To this must be added the lack of effective relationship between non-formal and formal education and their effective integration within the overall national development system.

(g) the need for opportunity to work while they learn or learn while they work and raising their families.

It may therefore be argued that arising out of the shortcomings of formal education and in general of schooling, came the search for alternatives, complements and supplements to formal education. This search led to the birth of the non-formal education concept (though the practice as distract from the idea is not a recent phenomenon) which is part of a widespread quest for alternatives in education to suit the changing conceptions of development. This paper therefore addresses itself to the concept of non-formal education as a recent phenomenon the relationships between non-formal education and development; the need for non-formal education and finally what measures and strategies through a systems approach ought to be considered in developing non-formal education for overall national development.

II. The concept of Non-Formal Education

Research appears to have abandoned the search for a general definition of non-formal education. Efforts have focused on its definition as a contextual or functional issue by identifying certain characteristics as being applicable to the NFE concept or by pin pointing issues that separate formal from non-formal education. In spite of all this, attempts have been made to define non-formal education as "a form of administration and programme provision (by government or non-governmental bodies) which takes place outside the formal education system"[1/] This view is more difficult to subscribe to when the Ministry of Education runs non-formal education through the same bureaucratic procedure and governmental structures. At the same time non-formal education could be looked at as a process which also adopts the rigid set forms of relationships of traditional schooling with regimented curricular, classroom, teacher or facilitator, descipline and syllabii, but unlike formal education, it is more flexible and diverse, being adapted to the particular needs of its clients or learners and their uni circumstances. Looked at it in this way, it can be agreed that much of what goes on is not like this but some form of elementary schooling in the methods and approaches used.

Non-formal education can be negatively defined as "all education that does not take place in schools, that is, the out-of-school education.[2/]" But among the many variants of out-of-school learning such as adult education, literacy programmes, correspondence education, distance teaching, community programmes, continuing education, extension and extra-mural studies, and extension work/ services, which ones of these should be regarded as most the non-formal form of education? This definition however, like the previous ones offered above, should be regarded as a contextual or functional issue by looking at characteristics that distinguish formal from non-formal education. Such contextual characteristics entail for instance:

(i) administrative affiliation in which case the distinction is based on sponsorship or government affiliation; whether one is run by government agency or privately sponsored. Often therefore concern is voiced over schoolish activities which are sponsored by non-school or non-education agencies.

1/ Duke Chris - in Adult Education and Development, German Adult Education Association, Bonn, FRG Issue No. 19 Sept. 1982 p.73.

2/ Grandstaff Marion: Programme of studies in non-formal education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 1974.

In considering administrative affiliation, non-formal education consists of all those activities not discharged by the formally designated educational agencies: or all those deliberate educational activities not conducted in the school system. In this regard, the out-of-school educational activities that closely resemble school activities constitute non-formal education such non-formal education activities may be informal or incidental.

(ii) A distinction may also be based on pedagogical style or approaches as to whether they are rigid, formal, teacher or pupil centred or on the adherence to certain established standards.

(iii) thirdly the distinction can be made on the clients of non-formal education, who are mostly the deprived rural population, school drop-outs, out-of-school youth, illiterates, school leavers yearning for a second education chance etc as opposed to formal school age population. In response to the clients, and its clientelle, the functions of the school appear clear, whereas that of non-formal education do not seem clear-cut in as far as NFE activities must be outside the recurrent central core of the schooling functions

(iv) finally, a distinction can be made based on the reward systems of formal and non-formal education. Whereas the rewards of the formal education system are general, they are more lucrative than those of non-formal education which although specific and contingent upon what is learnt, have less attractive benefits to many of its clients.

The concept of non-formal education can still be extended further for some people, it is primarily a way of extending the influence of the basic schooling systems in extension and field-based training, in-service and continuing education, as well as the uses of mass media for extending the influence and value of the structures of formal education. To people nourishing this concept interest in NFE is promising because it may represent a new emphasis on the value of education for the wider sets of people. For other people, interest in non-formal education is something else: a demand for alternatives for formal schooling so as to be able to do something worth while for those whose educational needs are not now being met. This position arises from the conviction that new ways are demanded so as to meet the needs of those who are unable to bend themselves into schooling establishment eg. out-of-school youth. Non-formal education therefore is more than new delivery systems. It is the restructuring of goals and even the underlying assumptions about what constitutes worth while content in education[1/].

Indeed non-formal education should not just be thought of as adult or out-of-school education confined to literacy or university extra mural studies, but it should include programmes in farmer training, all educative services to rural adult and youth producers, school age drop outs, left-outs of the formal system, illiterates and all those in need of second chance education.

1/ Ward Ted & Herzog William Jr.: Programme in Non Formal Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1977. p.4.

Whatever concept of non-formal education we may have, it is possible to identify three possible modes of non-formal education:

(a) education provided to youths and adults outside the formal system which does not lead to any value added paper qualification but provides the client with functional knowledge and skills for productive work;

(b) education for youths and adults outside the formal system leading to qualifications. This being deliberately provided as an alternative for them and as a form of second chance education intended to have the same results in both paper qualifications and the attendant renumerations as formal education;

(c) deliberate provision of education for both the youth and adults within the formal system to enhance their educational attainment.

The first two are the most common forms of non-formal education and it is with this in mind that we examine in the next section the relationship between non-formal education and development.

III. Non-formal Education and Development

In an earlier section of this paper, it has been pointed out that the concept of non-formal education as distinct from its practice is a recent phenomenon because there has always been some non-formal education of one kind or another from times past. But the concept and its practice have acquired greater significance in recent years because of the growing disatisfaction with the effects of formal education in relation to development goals, and secondly arising out of the fundamental changes in the definition of the "concept of development" itself which now incorporates ideas such as people or human beings, employment, environment, social equity, participation, privileges, basic needs satisfaction, growth etc. therefore one way of looking at non-formal education is to relate it to the concept of development, or to relate it to the major reconstruction of the concept of development now being propagated by international assistance agencies/organizations, receipients and that portion of the academic community concerned with the problems of development.

Indeed non-formal education idea as part of a widespread search for alternatives in education might acquire greater focus from a consideration of what development means. Looked at it in this way, NFE would assumes clarity and usefulness to the extent that is informed by an understanding of that toward which it is an instrumentality i.e. development itself.

Formal education has not proved to be neither the elixir fo curing development ills nor the key to modernization and development as was once hoped specially at the time of independence. In fact it has reached a point in many developing countries where it is making a negative contribution to development. Unemployment does not necessarily decrease with an increase in the level of education; nor does productivity increase with an increase in the number of educated people. In many developing countries, illiterates (the backborne of their agricultural economy) are employed as producers of food. Indeed formal education rather than being a general force for equality tends to increase income inequalities.

Non-formal education is being considered as an alternative because it is more responsive, tailor made and relevant to the needs of developing societies in rural areas. It focuses on teaching people to improve their basic level of subsistence and their standards of health and nutrition. In this way, it is more immediately productive and application oriented as learners acquire knowledge and skills for their immediate use thereby avoiding the long gestation period which often exists between formal education and productive employment. Since non-formal education usually requires the participation of its recipients in determining the nature and content of the educational programmes by focusing on their needs and priorities it therefore tends to be part of life, integrated with life and inseparable from it. This is not so because it deals with the execusion of agricultural, health, nutrition, literacy or mechanical skills, but because it tends to relate all these to the total life a man is living to the man he is and to the man he will become.

Through non-formal education a person does not just learn how to grow beans or peas, but learns also the effects of nutrition, not just the users of fertilizers but the benefits as well. It is therefore more of a force designed to change society and make it move towards self reliance and self sustaining, be able to control and induce change and able to contend with the momentum generated by change. It must be emphasized that NFE can do this in so far as it answers to the aspirations and needs of its clients; and is relevant to national goods. A mere change of emphasis from formal to non-formal education does not necessarily make the latter a more effective instrument for development.

Once again it must be pointed out that an emphasis on non-formal education does not entail a rejection of formal schooling which has been a very useful tool for certain purposes and will continue to be so. The major factor for us to turn to non-formal modes of education is a search for ways to do things that formal schooling has demonstrated its inability and incapability of doing; or things that can be done more effectively in the area of non-formal education rather than in formal schools. What is more pressing for us is the need to find means for effective learning which can be made available to more people at bearable costs. This, however, does not entail advocacy of non-formal education at the expense of abandoning formal schooling.

IV. The need for Non-Formal Education

Our efforts in re-aligning non-formal education to the needs and merging patterns of development is based on:

(a) the low costs involved in the development of non-formal education i.e. the low per capita or per instructional unit costs. In educational planning and decision making one cannot over-emphasize the importance of cost either in absolute terms or in terms of the proportion of national wealth. There is now increasing evidence to show that non-formal education can achieve the same or better results in education at very low per capita instructional unit cost.

(b) the limited time duration with frequent terminal points at which students may terminate their studies/training. Non-formal education has a short gestation period for an educational programme but with effective results at low costs.

(c) non-formal education has a clear and definite base in immediate human needs, be they economic, political, social, health, nutritional or educational. The focus for non-formal education is to give primary objectives which have a clear and immediate relationship to the existing human needs.

(d) non-formal education seems to cater for the provision and accommodation of the aspirations of its clients and participants, i.e. it recognizes and accommodates the aspirations of adults (literate or illiterate), unemployed youth, youths outside the school system, men and women out of work or at work, whether in urban or rural areas. In emphasizing accessibility to educational opportunities through non-formal processes, we can direct our attention to those cases that make the greatest provision for allowing the aspirations of the participants to function as powerful formative elements in programme planning and design.

(e) non-formal education has a solid linkage to real employment opportunities especially in labour intensive sectors such as agriculture and industry. As employment is a major imperative in any development effort, it does therefore provide an important focus for enquiry and planning in non-formal education with the main objective of equiping the participants with relevant knowledge and skills for immediate use.

(f) non-formal education allows for decentralized planning without the built-in- inflexibility which often arises from centralized planning. Non-formal education provides a good conceptual rubric for educational approaches which tend to maximize decentralization of design and planning. In fact, non-formal education tends to break conservatism in which often views education as a time and place bound process with the emphasis on conventional academic skills and subject matter, on the use of conventional institutional structures and on education being conducted at a certain time of one's life. Non-formal education allows for learning to be conducted in the home, in the street, in the field, through the press and other distance teaching and mass media facilities.

(g) non-formal education has a high potential for the distribution of whatever commodities are associated with it such as better education, economic gains, improved health, better nutrition and acquisition of skills for self employment.

(h) it provides an opportunity for people to learn while they work and raise their families and vice versa.

The emphasis on these points does not entail a conviction on our part that non-formal education is a magic solution to problems. The main issue is that it is a more promising approach to practical knowledge acquisition for immediate application for solutions of problems than formal schooling has proved to be ineffective in dealing with the issues of rural development. The advantage of non-formal over formal education is that the former tends to be a specific and not general remedy for educational shortcomings. Its utilization ought to be determined by contextual conditions provided proper use is made of it. In this regard we need to be clear in our minds what its best potentialities are and what conditions make it most effective in developing countries. Our concern in the next section is therefore focused on increased learning effectiveness through systems development of non-formal education.

IV. How to increase Effectiveness of Learning in Non-Formal Education

One of the major reasons advanced in favour of non-formal education is that it is less costly as an alternative for providing education to the majority of the people. But the problem is how to design measures for effective learning so as to achieve educational objectives at less cost. The design of effective non-formal education involves a consideration of the motivations, expectations, abilities of the target population and the rewards and reward systems in which the target population and the learning experiences operate.

First let us examine what brings a given target population to the learning experience. From the sociological point of view, is it conformity to societal norms or enforcement/requirement by society that motivate people to learning experience? Or from the psychological point of view, is it curiosity, anxiety, ambition or anticipation of rewards that motivate individuals or groups of people to a learning experience? Whatever approach we choose to take sociological or psychological we should be clear in our own minds as to the type of motivations which exist in a target population and once this has been done, then we should be able to identify the extant motivations which are appropriate and in harmony with educational goods. These motivations ought to be nurtured, enhanced and emphasized so that learning can be made more effective.

A second aspect then would be that once motivation has been identified, we need to seriously consider as to the benefits a target population would get from the learning experience, and the rewards of the programme. Some people take to non-formal education as a second chance in education to continue from where they stopped in the formal system. There are those who do it for prestige, recognition, status, income, power or simply for self fulfilment and qualification. Since the gestation period for non-formal education is shorter, the rewards appear to be more readily demonstratable than those of non-formal education.

However if NFE is to be effective, we need to be aware of what rewards and its systems exist in the personal-social occupational environment of the learners, and r realign then with educational goals. Motivation for learning is greatly enhanced if the rewards of a learning experience can be easily demonstrated either through change of income, increased social status or societal recognition.

Thirdly, if non-formal education is to be effective, the expectations of the target groups (be they pedagogical, topical or values) ought to be taken into account. What does a person who undergoes a learning experience hope to get from teachers, other learners, or from the programme content. Is he expecting a more practical or theoretical approach to the learning situation. Many programmes fail because the expectations of the programme designers and those of the learners are not in unison nor are they in harmony with the educational goals expected of the programme. It is important therefore that we should reinforce the expectations of the target population if learning is to be effective.

Another aspect that merits consideration is the matter of cognitive styles, mental and physical abilities of the target population. We need to know the level of ability of the target group to comprehend obstractions of both verbal and symbolic nature; their reading skills; the mechanical and manipulative skills previously developed before taking up this programme; the factors of health, nutrition, attention span, alertness, concentration and application of effort which might affect their learning. Above all, in terms of cognitive styles and habits of response to pedagogy, we need to define and identify learning styles which can be accommodated by the instructional design.

The approach given above can be diagramatically demonstrated as follows:

CONSIDERATION OF FACTORS FOR DESIGNING EFFECTIVE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Factors	Focus	Sociological	Psychological
I. Motivation	1. What brings the target population to the learning experience	A.(i) Conformity (ii) Societal norms (iii) Enforcement and (iv) Requirement	1. (a) Curiosity (b) Anxiety (c) Ambition (d) Anticipation of rewards
II. Rewards	2. What will the target population get from the learning experience	B. (i) Prestige (ii) Recognition (iii) Status (iv) Income (v) Power	2. (a) self-fulfilment (b) gratification (c) self employment (d) satisfaction
III. Expectations (Pedagogical, topical values)	3. What does the target population believe or hope will be their experience?	C. (i) Teacher: roles (ii) Content (iii) Utility	3. (a) abstract or concrete (b) practical rather than theoretical
IV. Abilities	4. What is the target groups able to do and capable of learning to do? (i.e. what are the constraints of learning?	D. (i) Pole acceptance (ii) Pole recognition	4. (a) mental ability (b) cognitive style (c) affective involvement

VI. Strategies for Planning Non-Formal Education: A systems Model

What has been said in the foregoing paragraphs brings us to the central issue of planning for non-formal education for integrated rural development. Non-formal education is not just about teaching of adults or for teaching adults to read, write, count or some useful skills or knowledge, nor simply for the delivery of knowledge, skills and information but for solving real problems of rural communities. It has to be emphasized that rural adults are the producers of food and as such they must play a larger role as agents of social change.

Our first concern therefore is to be clear in our minds as to definition of objectives in terms of what we expect to achieve through non-formal education i.e. our objectives need to be very clear, definitive and job/task oriented. Since our task is to equip the target population with useful knowledge and skills for dealing with income generation. The learning to be achieved ought to be practical, non theoretical, less obstract, and with specific goals based on pragmatic sorts of values.

Secondly we should study the target population, (adults - new literates or illiterates, out of school youth, drop-outs or those who want to have a second chance education) in relation to the motivations value systems and reward systems within the target population's environment; their cognitive style and capability in terms of previously acquired skills and their expectations about learning and about pedagogical environment. Needless to emphasize that a precise description of the target population is absolutely essential for the successful application of the systems development procedures for instructional planning. Indeed non-formal education appears best placed for ministering to the basic needs of its target population as it is supposed to equip them with knowledge and skills for immediate and useful application.

A third aspect in planning non-formal education is to specify institutional tasks. This can be done by identifying and describing precisely the learning task objectives and proposing the instructional experience which would ensure that the objectives are achieved. This, however, can be done if we are aware of the full range of possible instructional alternatives and we have some insights into the relevance of the instructional alternatives and cultural influences on the personalities of the target population. If we are to develop an efficient instructional system, we need not only be aware of the existence of alternatives but be able to make a choice among the alternatives. At the same time, we must identify possible instructional procedures that promise to achieve the learning objectives at less the cost.

We may need to ask ourselves how best we can achieve our objectives through for instance, distance teaching techniques, mass media or through practical assignments.

Closely related to this point is the need to specify support and management tasks. Central to the planning of non-formal education delivery system is the question of use of resources. We may wish to utilize existing resources (hardware) and put new instruction through these channels but with minor modifications; or decide to develop new resources and use them as instructional channels. Should we choose the first of using existing hardware, it will be necessary to negotiate with other ministries, agencies or organizations (e.g. radio or tv authorities) to ensure the success of the NFE programme. In the case of the second choice, new resources

or personnel may be needed but since this is likely to involve a small target groups, it may be a better option.

Another factor for consideration in the planning on non-formal education is to specify the level of performance to be learned by the target population. The level of performance is different from the learning task in that it is concerned with setting the minimum acceptable level in terms of accuracy, rate of performance or the quality level of the skill. Once we have defined the learning task, the question that may be asked is: what level of competency will the non-formal system attempt to achieve? whether it is the formal or non-formal system, it must be able to define a set of standards which represent the acceptable level of achievement of the skills or understanding. In our planning therefore, we should design a set of evaluative procedures which enable our target population to attain the expected levels of performance.

But these expectations can come to no avail if we do not have instructional materials. So our other concern is the need for the preparation of instructional materials which involves a set of tasks governed by decisions made in the specification of instructional objectives. The preparation of instructional materials demands a high degree of imagination if materials for NFE are to be useful. More importantly is the need to develop new materials for use in non-formal instructions than to adapt those originally designed for formal education because of the linguistic demands, conceptual level, degree of abstraction and differences in learning styles of the non-formal education target population.

With this mind, we should always attune instructional materials to the cognitive processes and pedagogical expectations of the NFE learners; and to provide effective learning, we should constantly take into account the cognitive differences and characteristics.

All these activities however, need trained people to ensure that they are properly done. Another important aspect therefore is the training of human resources to deal with non-formal education to ensure that the various human roles will be compatible and supportive. As a target group on its own, NFE personnel ought to have their needs analysed, their skills specified and instructional materials for their training specially designed. Most of those already involved in one aspect of education or another will need to be retrained so as to cope with the multiferous activities of non-formal education.

Given the multifarious non-formal education, delivery vehicles between knowledge organization centres with the client users, the need is for complementarity between the various vehicles; whether extension service in health, agriculture, co-operatives etc, or litteracy, numeracy in "adult" education, or correspondance/Distance teaching (or distance education, etc.) the point is that there may be need for restructuring the same within the frame purpose, content, and charts are determined.

While planning of the various non-formal educations delivery system and the various activities is going on, but before completing the system, it is vital that consideration be given as to how the effectiveness of the non-formal education programmes delivery system would be evaluated. For this purpose therefore, evaluation procedures based on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the programme's content delivery system, methodology, media, etc. should be designed. Such programme should include data collection on the various aspects, right from the analysis, at the begining, the design and development during and at the end of the programme and the operational monitoring of impact non-formal education systems graduates. One has to ask as to how we are going to assess the rewards and effectiveness of the programme and how such information is going to be recycled so that modifications can be made to the programme.

The most important step next is the operation of the programme itself. Oftentimes a programme may start with a trial phase and then from there proceed to include the greater number of the target population. Implementation of the programme requires that the right personnel is available to ensure at least modest success.

Finally we need to evaluate the learning and its programme. This can be done by collecting data to be used for decision making. Evaluation of the programme, whatever methods we use should be a continuous process to allow for feedback and modifications to the programme.

The whole process as described above is demonstrated in diagramatic form in figure 2.

Conclusion

We will conclude this paper by saying that non-formal education as a practice (as distinct from the concept) is concerned with the problems of learning effectiveness and real life problems. It has no other justification beyond being instrumental to facilitating the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes for solving life problems. Except for those types of non-formal education which are disguised alternative forms of formal education or which provide second chance formal education, non-formal education should have no system of artificial rewards, self-justifying paper certificates, or the self denied levels of accomplishment.

In non-formal education, the reality of its effectiveness is in application and use of learning to the practical problems of life. Non-formal education makes life changing educational inputs to the learner while the frame of reference is application and life style realities. Thus our search for learning effectiveness of non-formal education is not an option but a mandate that must be pursued with all vigour to complement and supplement the effectiveness of formal education. For multifarous problems of rural development in Africa, non-formal education appears better placed to deal with them. Therefore its planning and development are crucial to Africa's survival.

BASIC FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PLANNING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION: A SYSTEM MODEL